

## **FAI's Approach to Mentoring**

The Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) considers the development of the acquisition workforce to be its paramount concern. This development ranges from recruiting and retention strategies to certifications and professional development and training. One component of professional development on which FAI is focused is mentoring. Mentoring is an integral part of development and enables seasoned employees to impart wisdom and assist newer employees in reaching targeted goals.

Many agencies have homegrown mentoring programs which are well run and well planned. However, these programs are targeted to a variety of career areas and are usually intra-department or -agency focused. FAI envisions developing a program which reaches across government and is focused on bringing together individuals specifically within the acquisition community.

Currently FAI is developing templates, tools and approaches based upon proven leading practices and plans on releasing a web presence where the acquisition community can learn more about mentoring for the acquisition career field, and obtain related materials. This website will also solicit information from those who are interested in being mentors or mentees in the future.

The plans above are for implementation now, but **FAI views mentoring as going beyond providing materials and guidelines:**

FAI envisions developing a comprehensive formal mentoring program which facilitates interaction between professionals from agencies around the government who are dedicated to their own development and that of their peers, subordinates and superiors. Additionally, FAI believes a mentoring program should mirror the mission, vision and values of the Administration and model those of FAI. Therefore, encouraging cross-government communication is only one of the aspects of the FAI Mentoring Program. The Program also emphasizes transparency, education and development, engaging civilian, defense and intelligence sectors, and continually keeps in mind the best use of taxpayer dollars.

The FAI Mentoring Program's proposed components are listed and described below:

- **FAI Mentoring Program Interactive Website** – Includes tools and templates, web-based training, and a mentor-mentee selection tool which can be used for sign up and selection of mentors and mentees. The website is also used to collect information on individuals who are interested in participating including their area(s) of expertise, area(s) for development, and additional demographic information.
- **FAI Mentoring Program Representative** – An FAI employee assigned with the responsibility of monitoring the Mentoring Program. Responsibilities include overseeing the website and matching of mentor-mentee relationships, facilitating formal mentor assignments when preferred, sending out assessments, and compiling metrics and data to report on progress and impact of the Program.
- **Classroom/In-Person Training** – Recommended classroom training for mentors and mentees to facilitate understanding of roles, responsibilities, setting goals and monitoring progress. Offered

at set times throughout the year. This is recommended but can be supplemented or replaced with online training if attendance is not possible.

- **Orientation** - An orientation session to introduce mentors and mentees to the program and familiarize them with their responsibilities. Additionally, if these sessions are conducted in person they will provide the opportunity for the mentors and mentees to meet and begin the relationship building process.
- **Mid-Year Mentoring Assessment** – A check-in mid-year for mentors and mentees to monitor the program overall and their mentoring relationship. Feedback assists in adjustments at the Program level and encourages discussion and feedback between the mentor and mentee.
- **Events for Mentors and Mentees** – Events planned for the purpose of bringing together individuals in the program (mentor-mentee, mentor-mentor, and mentee-mentee events) to further the acquisition community's identity and to encourage best practices sharing beyond the one-on-one relationships.
- **Recognized Mentor and Mentee Awards Program** – A yearly award provided to the mentor and mentee who embody the values of the FAI Mentoring Program as well as those of the Acquisition Workforce. Specific nomination and selection guidelines to be developed and provided to participants.

In order to move forward with the FAI Mentoring Program vision, funding is required. FAI will solicit interest from agencies throughout the government in order to gauge the utility of such a program and once this is determined, FAI will seek the appropriate level of funding. As FAI is collaborating with the Department of Homeland Security on mid-level recruiting, we would like to engage another agency interested in mentoring as a partner.